

My Republican friends all talk about responsible spending and balanced budgets. Families will not be able to balance their own budgets if the extreme MAGA wing gets its way.

Madam Speaker, we have already witnessed what this so-called leadership looks like. The very first bill the GOP put before the House will make it easier to hand tax breaks to the wealthy and well connected.

They are not just trying to make it easier for the ultrapowerful to pay even less in taxes. Sadly, extreme Republicans want to gut Social Security, eliminate Medicare, and reverse new lower drug prices House Democrats just fought hard to get for working families.

If they have their way, Social Security and Medicare as we know it will end. Working families will lose the benefits they have earned by paying into a system for decades.

In my home district, there are more than 80,000 people living on their Social Security income. That is more than 10 percent of my constituents. These are retired workers, disabled workers, widows, and children who need these critical funds to survive.

Let me repeat: They earned their benefits by paying into the system for many, many decades.

When extreme MAGA Republicans fight and say they don't want to raise the debt limit, I want everyone to know what that really means. It is not economic theory; it is political posturing.

They raised the debt limit every time Trump was in office, and in fact, Trump is responsible for 25 percent of our current debt.

When they say they are going to fight, it really is about hurting people. It would mean Social Security payments won't be sent, and people already living hand to mouth won't get the money they earned. This is totally unacceptable.

The full faith and credit of the United States means more than paying our government's bills on time. It means keeping groceries in the refrigerator and medicine in the cabinet for many people in my district.

House Democrats will continue to fight for working families. It is the middle class that makes our country strong.

We will always put people over politics. We will always put people first.

KEEPING OUR CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. SPARTZ) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SPARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight an ongoing problem with our institution, which starts reminding one of a theater full of actors, a circus, or a dog-and-pony show with a lot of messaging, grandstanding, demagoguing, talking points, but no real results badly needed for the American people.

When Benjamin Franklin was leaving the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and was asked what kind of government the delegates had created, he replied: "A republic, if you can keep it."

It has been over 200 years since that time, but do we really appreciate what it means to have a constitutional republic, the rule of law, presumption of innocence, and proper due process?

As someone who grew up under a dictatorship in the Soviet Union, I cherish these freedoms tremendously, and I understand how hard it is to get them back when you lose them and how many people have died for them.

Therefore, regardless of politics, I will vigorously defend our Constitution and our rights for all Americans. Congress is not a kangaroo court and has proper committees, like Ethics or Judiciary, to provide proper due process to all individuals, whether it is President Trump and Representative GREENE or President Biden and Representative OMAR.

I adamantly argued last Congress as a member of the Judiciary Committee to provide this due process, so I am not planning to become a hypocrite now and lose this credibility. We have to become the adults in the room and stop the bread and circuses in Congress.

No one is above the law, but no one is below the law.

HONORING HARVEY DRAHOS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. STRICKLAND) for 5 minutes.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Harvey Drahos, a beloved World War II veteran who lives in the South Puget Sound of Washington State.

A member of America's Greatest Generation, he joined the military in 1943 and rose to the rank of technician fifth grade.

Like many of our World War II heroes, Mr. Drahos was wounded on the front lines, and as the Battle of Okinawa went on, he made a promise: If I survive, I vow to help people.

Like many of his generation, he made serving our great Nation and its citizens a cornerstone of his life's work.

Post-military service, he served on multiple service organization boards and dedicated 53 years of active community service and leadership to Washington State.

One piece of Mr. Drahos' story that stood out to me is that while on the battlefield in Japan, he recovered a cherished photo album. After decades of searching for the family it belonged to, he was able to get it back to the Nakamoto family in Okinawa. This selfless act helped a family reunite with their past loved ones, transcending the boundaries of war with a kind act of humanity.

Madam Speaker, Harvey Drahos exemplifies courage, selfless service, and

love for others. He recently celebrated his 100th birthday and is the last living member of his World War II military unit. I am honored and proud to recognize him for his service in combat and his love and compassion for our Nation.

CONGRATULATING ALFIE ALVARADO-RAMOS

Ms. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lourdes "Alfie" Alvarado-Ramos, who will retire at the end of this month as director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

I congratulate Alfie on an exemplary and distinguished career serving the American people and my fellow Washingtonians for more than five decades.

Alfie enlisted in the Army in 1971, rising to the rank of troop command sergeant major at Madigan Army Medical Center, part of Joint Base Lewis-McChord in my district.

After retiring from the military in 1993, Alfie joined the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and has served as its director for the last decade. Under her leadership, the department was recognized as the leading State veterans affairs department in the entire Nation, offering the largest portfolio of services.

Madam Speaker, throughout her career, Alfie has broken barriers and empowered the next generation of soldiers to lead at the highest levels of military and public service. More importantly, she has been instrumental in making sure that our veterans are never forgotten.

I thank Director Alvarado-Ramos for her selfless service to our veterans, the State of Washington, and our Nation. She is a true patriot indeed.

CELEBRATE LITERACY WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to wish you and all Americans a happy Celebrate Literacy Week.

The Florida Department of Education has designated this week as a week to focus on reading, but you don't have to be from Florida to celebrate reading. All Americans can work to inspire students and families to make reading a part of their daily routines and install a lifelong love of reading.

This year's theme is "Take a Deep Dive Into Literacy—Splash Into New Worlds." Fitting with the theme, I was honored and proud to read "Pirate Pete's Talk Like a Pirate" to the fourth grade classes at Yulee Elementary School in northeast Florida.

Yulee Elementary School is an outstanding, rated-A school based on the Florida School Accountability Reports. This school is led by Principal Bryce Cubbal and Assistant Principal Tara Libby. These educators are to be commended for the fantastic things they are doing for our students.

Madam Speaker, they say reading is fundamental, but I will say that it is